



PUPPETRY JOURNAL



VOLUME III — NO. 4

JANUARY - FEBRUARY - 1952

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Western College, Oxford, Ohio

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Here and There with Marjorie

Marjorie Shanafelt

(This is a letter to the Editor from Marjorie Shanafelt, whose puppets are loved by American audiences as well as Danish audiences.)

It was pleasant to see your handwriting on the recent card and flattering to know that you remembered my absence from the summer puppet conference, twice! This year's because of trying to catch up with the loss of the one before! As you know I was a-journeying.

It all began with an illness for which the University gave me 9 month's leave of absence. If I hadn't had an SOS from my dearest friend, baptized Sarah, I'd never have known what to do with the 9 month's freedom. I turned the key in my front door and started across the territory betwixt Lincoln, Nebraska and Beverly Hills, California in my over-loaded Dodge car. On the front seat beside me rode 3 of the gayest of my floor show puppets, ogling everybody, and with the aid of a sly twitch on a string, apparently winking at filling station attendants to their consternation. The less favored puppets went overland by truck.

My friend Sarah was quite aware of the fact that wheresoever I went my wooden-headed children must needs go too, and on arrival in Beverly we found ample space allotted us in the heart of the house where 3 steps up made a perfect puppet stage looking out over a huge living room. The only arguments were with the dachshund who considered a puppet shank the perfect tooth edger.

To Sarah's house came artists of various kinds, party succeeding party with the puppets flaunting their wares. From these people I learned many things for they were most generous in advice, suggestions, and applause. They expected me to become one of them in that unbelievable world of theirs. I remember the exquisite little ballerina, Marie Bekefi, who teaches movie people to do ballet (taught Margaret O'Brien); and Nina Saemundsen the Icelandic sculptress; and Polly James who writes Roy Rogers television shows; John Reddy of "Bride and Groom" radio programs who was soured on puppets because he had just thrown away \$10,000 on some that flopped; Mae Norton who runs the Hollywood Artist Bureau; and especially the precious Margaret Hamilton of both the legitimate theatre and the movies (I remember her as the Witch of Oz with Judy Garland).

Suddenly it all ended. Sarah's Danish husband wrote that he would be in Denmark indefinitely and suggested we all go to Denmark! So we did! We sold the beautiful home, had 14 tons of household effects packed, got passports and tickets, and in a matter of a few weeks were on the Danish freighter Manchuria heading for the Canal Zone and far-away Denmark. And the puppets were going too, some in a huge trunk, but a dozen occupied a bunk in one cabin. We had figured that 7 weeks on the ocean might offer the puppets opportunities for giving some pleasure and the supposition was correct. In the ship's modest salon they entertained passengers, gold-braid officers, and visitors that came aboard at the various ports (we made 8 countries). It

was fun in the salon, but intoxicating to do them on top of one of the huge hatches, under tropical stars with the ship's crew scattered about wheresoever they wished. The soft winds blew so warmly, the boat glided so smoothly. The crew came as they were - the cook from his kitchen, the baker from his ovens, the engine men with oil cans in their hands, stewards, cabin boys, dishwashers, in relays so that all could see. Most had never seen a puppet before. Most of them could understand no American, but the puppets speak a universal language - that of dancing feet and clever stunts. All the rest of the journey we 3 Americans were favored beyond the other passengers - 7 of them and all Danes.

Stopping at the back doors of countries we saw and learned many things not discovered by folks traveling on the big liners. Sometimes we stayed one day sometimes 5 depending on how much freight the ship disgorged or swallowed. Since it was past the tourist season we were not in competition with large tourist groups and everywhere we went we received much attention and many courtesies. But of puppets we saw little. In Antwerp we bought marzipan Punch and Judy figures. They came in all sizes from 3 inches to a full 36. Their costumes were outlined and trimmed with tiny silk ribbons thrust into the marzipan. In Hamburg, Germany I hunted up Connie and Henry Bockwoldt. You may recall seeing his name several times in our *P. of A. Journal*. Henry carves most beautifully and his puppet heads are masterly. Connie paints the puppet heads. She is a real artist with her brush. They would so like to come to the United States. Henry writes puppet columns for several papers and magazines over there and did me the honor of putting my picture on the cover of one called "*Der Komet*." In Rotterdam we saw St. Nickolas riding about the city in a taxicab! You may recall that originally the saint came up out of the ocean riding on a snow white horse while his black servant scattered pennies! This time the Saint was scattering his own coin! In the stores of all the places we stopped we saw many mechanical dolls in settings like puppet plays doing remarkable stunts. The epitome of these was in Copenhagen where mechanical figures about 4 feet high had an intricate routine involving opening and closing doors and windows, lighting street lights, singing and street dancing, amazing!

It was the first week in December when we arrived in Copenhagen and the turning, twisting streets were absolutely roofed over with festoons of greenery. The public squares had booths selling the Jul Bok the cocky little straw goat that presides over the household at Christmas time. You could buy him small enough to wear on your coat or life size to stand amongst the green trees that banked the front door for Christmas week. Certainly no time could have been more wonderful in which to arrive than the Christmas season. The air was cool but not cold; soft mists fell day and night feeling like the caress of a chiffon veil. Through this mist one saw the green copper spires and towers that add up into hundreds, fantastic in shape but ever graceful. The music of the bells hanging in these towers showered down upon us, playing the clock time but interspersed with hour long concerts of the masterpieces of music. Everywhere were bronze statues, heroic in size, commemorating heroes . . . remember the ancestors of the Danes were the picturesque and valiant Vikings.

After a week in Copenhagen we moved to a villa just beyond Copenhagen. In this old world house the puppets took up residence in a couple of huge wooden cupboards and as soon as we were installed they began to make new friends, for knowing no Danish bothered them not a whit. My friend Sarah and I managed very well in this strange world since her husband could bridge all gaps for us. We met all sorts of Danes, high class and low, and do the Danes have class distinction! One of the people who came to the house often and who fell willing victim of the puppets' charms happened to have tremendous influence because he controlled the apportionment of coffee over the city! And when you realize that over there the personal allowance of coffee is $\frac{1}{4}$ pound a month, and that Danes love their coffee, you'll have an idea of what can be done with coffee beans. This person was called by a delightful nickname, Kai-Kai (make it a long "i"); he was a tall cadaverous individual with such a face as would have befitted a mortician but was on the contrary a most admirable clown and mimic who could have played the part of Koko with distinction. Kai-Kai decided to give the puppets a fling in the big entertainment spots. I thought he was joking but he got the dates and if I hadn't had to leave 4 weeks sooner than planned because of ship cancellations I'd likely be right there now.

He introduced us at National Scala a huge eating place like a football stadium with tier upon tier of tables rising to the roof. All seats are reserved days in advance. One eats for at least 3 hours. The women smoke tiny fragrant cigars. The place is spilling over with brilliant scintillating lights and flowers and statues and paintings and music and laughter. The acts on the stage are the finest specialty work in Europe. Everybody eats right through the acts and talks and laughs, and seldom applauds. The greatest compliment possible is silence and then applause. The American got both, plus a huge bouquet from the management, plus an immediate offer from the manager of Tivoli Gardens to become a part of its glorious assembly of artists. The newspapers wrote nice things about us and used some pictures. Kai-Kai went about with a fistful of pictures of the puppets in his pockets. Dates began to roll in but -

The ship's office called at breakfast - boats cancelled (a little matter about hams in New York's harbor) - 6 hours to pack and get to the dock if I was to reach home at the expiration of my 9 month's leave. So it was on the Polish communist ship **The Batory** that I sailed. And what I could write you about that ship! O, of course, the puppets were a godsend to the Captain's party and I have a beautiful folder in which printed with gold is a most exquisitely worded "thank you" for the puppet show, and also I have a picture of one of the puppets sitting on the captain's lap - he is a very handsome gentleman and I do hope the Floozie appreciated how privileged she was.

Considering the many miles and the long time it would seem that a puppeteer should have done more about puppets and other puppeteers, but after all this whole affair was an SOS and I was a guest and very, very busy being the helpful friend. There was one delightful afternoon at the National Museum during Christmas week. They were showing puppets there for children only, but when I said I was a puppeteer from America they most courteously gave us the honor place

in the room, standing room in the very center! No seats! A stage at either end like Turnabout in Los Angeles. At one end was a hand puppet stage called "Mester Jakel Teatret" and at the other a string puppet stage, with a crystal chandelier and a puppet audience. The children behaved most prettily and talked back to Mester Jakel. The marionette stage was large as were the puppets. They were carved of wood, were caricatures of a quartet of singers, were very stiff but all in all very good. When we squeezed out past the parents waiting in the corridor we found ourselves in the middle of a huge display of sheets of toy theatres. Some were very old. The books with the words and instructions were there too. There were truly hundreds of these sheets in the cases that lined both sides of the hall. Soon we found ourselves looking at theatres themselves all very old. They were delightful enough but when the passage opened into another longer hall lined on either side with toy theatre sets from some 50 plays we really got excited for with the aid of tiny footlights, spots, and floods, with all the magnificance of make believe these little scenes glowed in the dark corridor and seemed to grow in size as one looked. Later, I was invited to attend a meeting of the club that collects these but alas, when that evening arrived I was on the churning dashing stormy north seas headed for home.

If the dove of peace ever gets its olive branch planted in or on the heart of Europe I am going back, perhaps to stay, and certainly to see all the things I missed before, when I went to California and came home by way of Denmark.

Thoughts on Showmanship

Basil Milovsoroff

(Basil Milovsoroff answers with his version of Al Wallace's question, "What is Showmanship?")

Showmanship to me always has meant the way of putting over a show effectively. The show can be telling a joke, doing a dance, a song, presiding over a meeting, performing with puppets, or anything else involving doings before an audience.

The simplest experience of showmanship, I believe, is had by anyone who enjoys telling a joke, or a bit of gossip to a friend, or to a group of them. The elements involved in this are very simple: some well-remembered facts to tell, personal way of telling them, enjoyment of doing this for the purpose of fun with others. Simple indeed, yet it would be futile to prescribe any cut and dried sure-fire formula of effective showmanship, for there is none. There are, however, tangible things one can do toward good showmanship, and these are: (1) enlarging one's knowledge of his art and all that has a bearing upon it; (2) improving one's individual way of expressing this knowledge; (3) learning to do this with abandon, i.e. with complete concentration and enjoyment, which if present, always infects the audience. For those

who like formulas these elements may form a sort of triangular one: competence, personality, and abandon, but it will be a formula of only the primary colors, so to say, from which the artist, or the showman will have to make up, or compose whatever palette he will, or is able. It is this "composing" that constitutes the showmanship and it will always vary with the idio of each artist or showman.

Since the Puppet Theatre we are most familiar with today is still largely of representational, or imitative character, I think, we conventionally look for showmanship in the puppeteers' acting with the puppet. I think it is this emphasis on acting that evoked from some puppet sage the familiar dictum - "A good puppeteer can enact a good show with any kind of puppets, - good, bad, or indifferent." Indeed, to justify this some fifteen years ago Obratzoff in Moscow went to a revolutionary extreme and did astonishingly effective acting on the puppet stage with bare hands and two plain balls for heads. This year we had a report of a French puppeteer in Paris improving on that, and doing an act on a puppet stage with bare hands and no balls. It would not be surprising if some puppeteer will go a step further and do an act with no hands, no nothing. This is no joke. Think of the nice beginning made by Harvey in that direction on the legitimate stage. Yet all these most remarkable vaudeville fits of acting do not alter the fact that here can be no Puppet Theatre without the Puppets. So it is not unsound to recognize that we are bound to deal for all foreseeable future with color, line and form of which the puppet is made and that there can be much showmanship in these if used competently, in individual manner, and with a certain flair. Moreover, it may not be unsound to believe that honestly artificial use of color, line, and form animated by imaginative integration of motion, sound, and light may offer a direct means of creating the Puppet Theatre holding an exciting promise of dynamic growth of a unique Art which perhaps has been arrested by keeping the puppet only as a means to a means - a prop adjunct to an actor's repartee, or to playing a miniature copy of the legitimate stage.

This brings me to the question I am asked to answer: "What is your How?" My "how" in producing a show is simple. In doing a show I "see" it rather than "hear" it. To explain, - although the creative process begins with a story, an episode, or even a bit of music - I visualize these through the eyes of my fancy in terms of animated figures, not descriptive words or dialogue, and so these figures come first. Thus, whatever I have to say creatively I can better say it through embodying much of it in color and contour of the puppet, its motion, and simple setting for it, if I feel one is required. I try to put in them as much skill as a craftsman and imagination as a creative artist as is given to me. If I do not succeed in creating puppets that I enjoy and feel others will, too, I discard them and do them again until I feel they begin to "draw in" into their world of imagination those who look at them. After this is done I try to integrate only that theatre paraphernalia which brings in motion the fancy that these puppets and their surroundings are, to round it into a story, an experience, a whimsy which may have the beginning, the middle, and the end, or may not.

If I were to produce, say such an overpuppeted-to-death tale as

"Jack and the Beanstalk", I would not see Jack and the giant as replicas of a boy and an overgrown man. I would look for an "image" for each one of them so that their resemblance to their living prototypes would be coincidental rather than real because in the land of fancy the sense of proportion, abstraction, beauty is its own.* The beans probably would be oversize, have beany arms and legs, and would do a ballet around the beanstalk to some lovely music. The doors and windows might open and close by themselves. The chimney might belch purple and green smoke. The weathervane cock might suddenly crow, and many other things might happen that have never been mentioned in the original story. The story would be a vehicle for puppets, a motif to be visually interpreted as a fantasy. I believe that in most everyone's land of fancy things happen and words have little value unless they have some special dramatic or satiric color, help things to happen, or "glue" happenings together. Thus the spoken lines in this production might not be half as clever, and not too many, as they would be in the show with a regular play approach in which the power of word is so important.

I do my "composing" in large measure visually, and whatever showmanship I achieve in my shows is largely to see, for I try to produce pictures in a picture frame in which everything comes to life and takes on a third and a fourth dimension. This is the best way I know how to say what I have to say creatively with puppets. If my way does not conform to more prevalent ways, it matters not, for I do believe if one has something attractive to say, and says it well in his own way, through whatever means he has, and loves doing it, he does not need to give much concern to rules, or precedents, for as long as human spirit is free to strive for happiness and beauty, hungry listeners there always are, and will be.

*See "Puppets and Robots", **Puppetry Journal**, June, 1951

SHOWMANSHIP WITH THE SALZBURGS

(Critical comment by Basil Milovsoroﬀ)

Have you seen the **Salzburg Marionettes**? They are among the top I have seen in what I call an Italian realistic tradition which dominates European puppetry, and which Sarg passed on to us.

I did not see the children's fairy tales, only the Mozart program and Pavlova. It was very lovely, worth the time and money to see it. Everyone should. Yet it underlined most emphatically everything I have said in my article on puppets. The loveliest puppet fantasy they succeeded in producing at times only stressed the (artistic) futility in imitating realism on their part and ours. Do unto real theater what is real, and unto puppet what is puppet. The skillful imitation of the real with puppets does have its charm, value, and place; but it does not achieve the true Puppet Theater because it does not touch the true inner interpretative power of the puppet and its ability to produce an artistic spectacle fully and consistently its own, offering a singular, unadulterated aesthetic experience to the audience. We, in America, I think, are ripe to move, and have been moving, in this inward, creative, most promising direction.

Bermuda and Back

Doug Anderson

The voice at the other end of the phone queried; "How would you and the missus like to work a cruise to Bermuda?" The answer was naturally in the affirmative. Later that week we signed the contracts to ship out as entertainers aboard the Furness Line's prize luxury liner, The Queen of Bermuda. The arrangements called for us to work as two single acts, so Gayle was booked to appear with her marionettes, and I with a straight magic act.

Never having worked an ocean voyage, we eagerly awaited our sailing date. The night before we were up late packing puppets, magic props, ironing silk productions for my act. The next morning we loaded the Ford and headed into town toward the Hudson. It seemed a perfect day but we dreaded getting aboard with all our paraphernalia.

Getting aboard ship with all our personal luggage plus a puppet stage, a record player, ten marionettes, three white doves, costumes and a trunk full of magic equipment was a much easier task than we had imagined. The dock attendants, guards and such were most eager to give us a hand. Maybe they liked my winning smile, (or could it be that Gayle is a gorgeous blond?)

Once on ship we were ready to relax and begin a seven day cruise to Bermuda and Nassau. Whistles whistled and streamers streamed and the bright and luxurious Queen of Bermuda pulled away from the smog darkened pier at 55th Street in lil' ole Manhattan. We were on our way . . . puppets, birds, props and all.

Aboard ship we were required to give but two performances. The bill consisted of a boy singer, Gayle and her marionettes, me with my trickery tom foolery and a girl singer.

To keep Gayle from rolling out to sea, her stage had to be rolled onto a special rubber mat and lashed to a post. Her dancing marionettes performed with motion they never had before, thanks to Father Neptune.

Cruise crowds are a rather folksy bunch. They are wonderfully receptive people and buy everything a performer does. However, they enjoyed novelty puppets more than dancers and such. Our juggler and break-a-way "drunk" seemed most popular with this audience.

Unlike most engagements where you play the date and go home or to your hotel, on a cruise you have to live with your passengers for the entire cruise. Needless to say that after the first performance you become a ship-board celebrity. By the time you do your second performance, your audience has become "old friends". It's an ideal performing situation.

On practically every cruise, they book two singers, a magician and a girl novelty act. Puppets are novelties in the jargon of show biz and the ten percent (?) tycoons. Gayle being a puppeteer and very much a girl and my being a magician (in addition to a puppeteer) made the whole deal ideal for us as they refuse to book doubles.

The cruise itself is wonderful . . . and on this particular week in November the ocean was on its very best behavior. We saw the sun every day but the last.

What a week! Bicycling about picturesque Hamilton, Bermuda; swimming in the blue green waters of Paradise Beach in the Bahamas; sipping cool drinks beneath the giant cocoanut palms at the Royal Victoria Hotel in Nassau while calypso bands serenaded us; looking and loafing and soaking up the warm tropical sun.

The drab grey docks and the wet slushy snow looked dismal as we put into port again in New York. We could still hear the native calypso chants in our ears. It had been a wonderful week. We had met many interesting people and to our delight, a few old friends. So, unless we change our plans we will be putting out to sea again about March . . . puppets, birds, magic props and all.

Masters of Pantomime

Herb Scheffel and Lea Wallace

Every puppeteer, dancer, actor and artist should be compelled to see the most unusual novelty act ever seen in this country, Les Main Joly (the Hands of Yves Joly).

We caught the act at the "La Vie En Rose" in New York City, two nights after they opened on December 19 and went back again and again. The turn, a French import of pantomime sketches and dances was brought to this country by Lou Levy, manager of the Andrews Sister, who caught the act last summer at a small Parisian cafe, Nico's **Rose Rouge**. Playing nightly to packed houses, they numbered among their ardent admirers, Jean Cocteau, Jean Anouilh, Jean Paul Sartre, Savitry and Miro.

The Joly's consider themselves the modern equivalent of the strolling players of medieval days. They started their theatrical life with Leon Chancerel and his "**Comediens Routiers**" (**Comedians of the Road**), the French counterpart of the Old Vic. After the war Yves organized his own small troupe of actors and barnstormed in little towns of Southern Europe and North Africa.

The Joly's come from Neuilly, a suburb of Paris. Their home is a converted garage, lacking all modern conveniences, but abounding in artistic confusion. Up to now, they have toured in a wheezy 1920 sedan with a trailer for extra equipment. Their \$2400 a week still baffles them . . . it is many times more than they can make in a year in Europe.

The present troupe is comprised of four people, Yves Joly, owner and choreographer, and his assistants, Mlle. Dominique Gimet, Georges Tournaire and Mlle. Midez (substituting for Mme. Helene Joly, who stayed at home to watch over the six little Jolys).

The four performers use only their eight expressive hands, plus bits of cloth, paper and fur and a few changes of white and brilliantly colored gloves to produce an act which is sincere artistry and sheer poetry. The

(Continued on page 26)



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

FESTIVAL IN MAGNOLIA LAND

Jean and Wesley Wiksell promise us not only a wonderful Festival, but a profusion of magnolias and crepe myrtles to greet us. It is not too early to plan for what promises to be a glorious vacation in the Southland. The date is June 24 through June 27 for the Festival, and June 28 through July 5 for the Institute. Put a red ring around those dates on your calendar now.

GAYLE AND DOUG ANDERSON

Because of their interest in puppets as a junior high school hobby, Gayle and Doug were the first two Juniors to register at the puppetry conference in Detroit, in 1936. Gayle continued her puppet study in The Ohio State University, securing one of the few master's degrees in this field. Working with Marjorie Batchelder, she built a modern set of college characters based on the principles of the *Commedia del Art*, and in collaboration with Merle Swineford Dilley, who was working on a master's degree in speech, produced a number of college plays. It was here that she developed the Michael Hand and Rod puppet, which has proven so successful for the high school and college level.

Doug left the Columbus Art School in his senior year for a three year's stretch in the Aleutian Islands, where he carried his marionettes into the Special Service Department of the Army, in addition to writing radio plays and producing shows.

After another six months in France, he returned to the States. Through Paul McPharlin's influence, he was requisitioned by the Special Service Headquarters in New York City to do the illustrations for a puppetry manual for the occupational therapy department of the Army. Contributions to the manual were being made by scores of **P of A** authorities. The mass of material became so great and confusing that Marjorie Batchelder was enlisted to organize and edit the material, with the result that the final edition took the form of **The Puppetry Theater Handbook**, now the leading authority on all phases of puppetry. Doug's original illustrations were retained for the **Handbook**.

Although Gayle retains her position as head of the Art Department of The Greer Hydraulics, a large engineering firm in Brooklyn, Doug devotes his full time to entertainment in the New York area. Both prefer to work children's shows, but they have combined their magic and puppetry in every field of entertainment, night club, theater, radio, movies, commercials and TV.

Puncho (shown here) and His Pals, are highly stylized versions of the old Punch and Judy characters. Puncho appeared as the hero of





FESTIVAL
in
MAGNOLIA LAND

June 24 - 27



Gayle *and* Doug
Anderson

with
Puncho the Puppet



LES MAIN JOLY

The Hands



Dance the 'Sea Fauna'



BACKSTAGE

RALPH CHESSE'



Willie and the Baron
with



Sherlock Holmes
and
Dr. Watson



Pleasant Hall
L.S.U.





"Puncho, the Puppet," in *Puppet Comics*, for more than a year and was also the star of the radio version of "Puncho and His Pals," written and produced by Gayle and Doug and heard over a New York Station for a year and a half.

"Bermuda and Back," in this issue, gives an account of one of their most recent puppet adventures.

LES MAIN JOLY

Even without rhythm and motion, the vital forces behind the artistry of the Jolys, the "hands" form an artistic pattern as they pause in their presentation of "The Sea Fauna." Backstage, the performers are, top to bottom, Yves Joly, Mme. Helene Joly, Mlle. Dominique Gimet and Georges Tournaire.

RALPH CHESSE

Ralph Chesse, who contributes the article, "Puppets on the West Coast," in this issue, is shown here with puppets from his TV show.

PLEASANT HALL

This spacious dormitory, housing 400, will be home to Festival folks when they arrive in L.S.U. next June. In addition to providing sleeping rooms (all at a nominal cost), the hall has a spacious reception room and foyer which will house the exhibit. Wesley and Jean Wiksell are keeping the mails busy contacting the different committees who are assuming responsibility and planning the 1952 Festival. Full particulars of the Festival and Institute will appear in the next issue of the Journal.

Color Slide Library

The entire exhibit at the 1951 Festival was photographed in color by George Hoxie, A.P.S.A. and 2 by 2 color slides will soon be available to members on a loan basis. There are 35 slides in a complete set and four sets are being prepared. Mr. Hoxie is one of America's outstanding photographers and the slides he has produced for us have vivid color and sharp detail. They are well worth the only cost involved to members — postage to and from the Executive Office.

We also have one excellent set of twenty-four 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 and $\frac{1}{4}$ color slides of the 1950 Festival made for us by Clarence List. These are now available on the same basis.

Many members own 2 by 2 color slides and transparencies which would make valuable additions to the P of A slide library now being developed. Puppets appear to much better advantage in color than in black and white, and it will be some time before the *Puppetry Journal* includes color plates! This is your opportunity to let other members see examples of your work and, in turn, to see theirs. If you have some 35mm transparencies which will make good 2 by 2 slides, send them to the Executive Office with descriptive captions. We will have them duplicated and return the originals to you.

(Continued from page 9)

audience sees only the hands behind the black velvet booth during the performance. Movement and imagination are their chief props. Backstage, four bodies are huddled together, eight arms are intertwined, knotting and unknotting themselves in rhythm to the music, now fast, now slow, as a giant octopus. Behind is nothing but a black velvet drop and two baby spots, worked with a dimmer. Most of the dances and sketches are done with just gloved hands. The few puppets used are designed before the audiences' eyes in a sketch called "Bristol," in which the puppets are built as part of the skit . . . white paper . . . bits of soft material and fur . . . a few rag flowers . . . only to dissolve into their original form again at the end of the skit.

It is difficult to describe the Joly's act. The group has that Walter Wilkinson touch, but more so. Movement is direct and simple. The total effect is stylized and abstract. Its simplicity compels the spectator to bring something of his own imagination into play. During the whole performance, a quiet awed feeling comes over the house . . . you can almost hear the audience's minds and imaginations at work taking part in the performance. Here is the essence of real puppetry and pantomime . . . hands doing things that are impossible for human beings to do! Les Main Joly leaves you forever wanting more.

Their routine includes pantomimes of sea fauna, The Rockettes, wrestlers on a Mediterranean beach, Apache dancers, an unusual strip tease and our favorite, Coney Island Fourth of July. Music, when used, ranges from Lionel Hampton's "Jack, the Bellboy" to Erik Saties ballet suite, "Les Gymnopieds," all played softly — no fanfares. Some numbers are done in complete silence.

What puppeteers could learn from these four people! No trunkloads of paraphernalia, no exorbitant building cost, not a sequin in the show!

Every bit of advice that has ever been given to puppeteers is carried out to perfection by Les Main Joly. The equipment they use is charming, convincing and just enough to pique the imagination of his audience.

Frances Raphard, in the *British Puppet Theater* of August-September 1950, says: "Joly is an inventor, artist, poet, who creates his own instruments for inspiring his audiences with his own humor and imagination. He tried puppetry, which allowed his creative gifts infinite freedom of expression. He began, like every true puppeteer, with a long period of growth, with many ups and downs, for a puppeteer does not just happen by choice.

"Today, Joly is no longer a man of the theater. He does not try to put on a theatrical show with his puppets. His style remains truly that of the puppet, relying neither on technical perfection, on decorative scenery nor owing anything to the theater.

"Joly, more than any other, has that intense power of suggestion achieved largely by his very simplicity, and above all, by the passion which inspires the vitality of each member of this sympathetic team."

So, for a terrific inspiration for your future productions and a perfect lesson in showmanship, see Les Main Joly. If they play a theater or club in your vicinity, go! There's a lot you will learn about "What is Puppetry?"

TV on the West Coast

Ralph Chesse'

(Ralph Chesse', of San Francisco, with years of experience in the adult marionette theater, finds some problems in the TV puppet theater.)

My program consists of impossible interviews conducted by Baron Woody, ambassador to the world at large without portfolio. Each Monday and Wednesday at six, he has an invited guest from some well known story who answers questions about his particular adventure. Willie, the office boy, is the go between, and invariably breaks in on the Baron's opening announcement. When the guest or guests arrive, anything can happen and usually does, as in the case of "The Three Wishes," where the fairy pays the Baron a visit and gives him a wishing ring with three wishes. When the woodchopper and his wife arrive, the situation becomes complicated and in the mixup, the Baron finds himself with the sausages dangling at the end of his nose. The guests make a quick exit. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson solved a mystery when they appeared, and also discovered a skeleton in Baron Woody's closet.

Producing the show, adapting the characters and writing two fifteen minute scripts each week is my chore. Saturday is reserved for rehearsals in which I am ably assisted by my son Dion and Lettie Connell who voices and manipulates the women and children characters. Dion handles the male parts including Willie, and I play the Baron.

During the six months Willie and the Baron have been on the air, I have covered characters from two different stories each week. Young listeners have been asked to suggest characters to be interviewed, the popular choice being Alice in Wonderland and Cinderella. I'm sure Disney was largely responsible.

Since so much time must go into production on such a program, we have to read scripts while we manipulate. This is a very definite handicap which makes carefully timed manipulation almost impossible. We have no camera rehearsal and have twenty minutes in which to set up, after the preceding program. I have also discovered that adventure serial films, usually ten or fifteen years old, to say nothing of the old westerns that clutter up the net work, offer the toughest competition. Years of movie going seem to have conditioned TV audiences to select the worst programs the stations have to offer, resulting in highest ratings going to old films rather than to live shows. These ratings are carefully watched by advertisers who buy TV time.

TV or not TV, that is the question. I think it would be both interesting and profitable to have **Puppetry Journal** conduct a survey on TV puppet shows and commercials, with the object of airing all of the problems TV involves, and of finding out ways and means of meeting the competition which does exist for puppeteers. Also from the experience of others in the field, what advantage do filmed programs have over live programs, and vice versa.

Report of Work Committees

Meredith Bixby - V. Pres.

The Guild Committee. Gail Januzzi, Chairman.

In order to encourage and help with the formation of more regional groups, this Committee has been studying groups (or Guilds) already in operation, and will shortly present its suggestions for organizing Guilds in some fairly easy and uniform way.

The Play Study Committee. Alfred Wallace, Chairman.

The Play Study Committee is assembling a list of good puppet plays already printed, with information as to their source and the amount of royalty charged. This Committee would also like to have plays by members that could be printed by the **P of A** and offered free of royalty to interested groups. If you have a play to offer, please send it to Alfred Wallace, 209 East 88 Street, New York City.

The Traveling Museum Exhibit Committee. Spence Gilmore, Chairman.

The **P of A** has received many requests for museum exhibits. This committee has plans and sketches for four free-standing exhibit cases and three-panel screen which would be available to museums and libraries. These cases would contain some historic puppets and modern types of string, hand, rod and shadow puppets.

The Teaching Aids Committee. Marjorie Shanafelt, Chairman.

This group plans to prepare simple "how-to-do-it" work sheets on technical phases of puppetry. Illustrations, working drawings and text will be included.

Visual Aids Committee. Dottie Gleason, Chairman.

This committee plans to collect Kodachrome slides and have duplicates made, and to collect black and white 8 by 10 photos (glossy) of puppets. These will be circulated in an album. If you have good Kodachrome slides that may be duplicated or 8 by 10 photos, you would care to have included in this traveling exhibit, send to Dottie Gleason, 1612 Clio Road, Cincinnati 30, Ohio.

Educational Exhibit Committee. Gertrude Saastamoinen, Chairman.

This Committee plans to build exhibit cases housing samples of the different types of puppets, one case for each type: hand, string, rod and shadow. Primarily for use by teachers, these would include step-by-step examples of puppet construction. This Committee will need the support of the membership in acquiring the exhibit material. If you can contribute any types of puppets, please send them to Gertrude Saastamoinen, at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

If you have any questions on the Work Committees, address chairman or Meredith Bixby, Director of Work Committees, Saline, Michigan.

Make Ready for the Show

Spence Gilmore

We haven't a coast-to-coast show, but we do have a local business, and first essential for starting such a business is a portable stage—and I do mean portable. Then, with a repertoire and the necessary puppets, one is ready to go.

The only advertising we have ever done is to send out postcards, bearing a block cut of the puppets and a little message about "Puppet Shows for Children's Parties." The response is excellent, but the best advertising, and the one by which our little business has grown, is the word of mouth variety, where one person sees the show and tells another about it.

Our show caters almost exclusively to children's parties—birthday parties, or parties for clubs and organizations, and the "almost" allows for shows at School Carnivals and P.T.A. affairs. This, of course, limits your audience, but you'll be surprised how many children there are in your city. You will find that the adults will like your show, too, but I still think it is because they are sharing the enjoyment with the children, so I believe it is important to find out what style of show suits you best, and stick to it.

Once you have started, you'll find you are kept busy whipping up new material for repeat audiences. Plays for hand puppets are hard to find, so I write my own. It is true that children like repetition, but they also like surprises, so keep your show fresh with new material, then no matter how many times a youngster may see your show, he may always anticipate a surprise.

Last of all, because this type of a puppet business is always on the go, keep your show simple throughout. Make that portable stage as easy to assemble as possible; carry the minimum of equipment; keep the lighting simple and don't confuse yourself backstage with more gadgets and props than is absolutely necessary. You'll be busy enough as it is. Allow plenty of time to "set up," then show your audience a good time and you'll find that you're having a good time, too.

Cooperation with AETA

William Ireland Duncan, P of A's representative on the Advisory Council of the American Educational Theatre Association, with which P of A is now affiliated as an organizational member, attended the national meeting of AETA in Chicago December 26-29.

As a result of discussions with Barnard Hewitt, editor of the *Educational Theatre Journal*, and William Halstead, president of AETA, arrangements are being made for an exchange of articles between our respective journals, and for a sectional meeting on puppetry at the 1952 AETA convention which will be held in Cincinnati December 29-31.

AETA has a membership of approximately 2,000, the majority being teachers of theatre arts in colleges and high schools.

Journal Notes

Jero Magon succeeded Wm. I. Duncan as Editor of the Puppetry Department of **Players' Magazine**. Contributions from **P of A** members are invited. Send to Jero Magon, 135 McDougal Street, New York 12, New York.

The **P of A** has a staff of consultants, one for each of the four fields of puppetry in which advice is most often asked. If you need the services of a consultant, refer to the list on the first page of the **Journal** and send your questions directly to the proper person.

Don't forget to send for your official blue and silver membership labels. Use them on stationery, brochures or luggage. Two-hundred for \$1.00. One thousand for \$3.50. Order from the Executive Office.

All material and photographs for publication must reach the **Journal** office on the first of the month preceding publication. (See page 1 for dates of publication.) If material is late, the **Journal** is late. No exception can be made!



STEVE "MIDDLEBURY, IND

Mizpah Moress writes that while the **Salzburg Marionettes** were in Chicago, they were seen by the Hoffmans, Hills (who entertained them), Gordon Sisters, Webers, Nelsons, Cormany's, Windbergs, Coles, Mores and Merringtons, "but they would not let us backstage." "It was lovely." Mizpah also reported on the death of "Uncle Herman" Stoike, a watchman at Ravenwood Hospital and a retired city policeman. He did much for the **P of A** during his many engagements in and around Chicago with his vent figure, made by Pinxy. Art Zapels of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, have a son christened Arthur Mark. The Zapels visited the Stevens' Mouse-trap in January.

Jane Clark, of Burlington, Vermont, did a **Kingsland** store window show at Hearn's, November through Christmas eve. Mrs. Clark did a marionette Christmas show in an 8th grade art class in Burlington Junior High. She says, "I certainly appreciate my contact with the **P of A**." Thank you Ma'am! Helen Brown's (Great Falls, Montana) husband was in Mayo Clinic for seven weeks, but Helen managed to do shows in between times at St. Mary's Hospital and at kid parties. Says her husband is getting interested — tags along if only to switch lights on and off, and is almost convinced he would like to come to the next Fes-

tival — if it doesn't come at "farmer time." Watch it, husband. You're slipping! Vivian Michael and Peg Blickle are elated over the news that their eight-week Christmas TV show (WBNS-TV, Columbus, Ohio) received a national rating of 15.9 out of a possible 17 point rating. The success of the show "upped" their director's, Dick Greenwald, reputation as well as salary. They're already making plans for next year. How fast can time fly?

New York Times, October 31, said a Mr. Michael Myerberg is "about to disclose a new invention of a super-puppet with the ability to 'outact any actor'." Well, that's nice. Fern Zwickey, Detroit, demonstrated puppets at a Teacher's Convention in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, at the request of Blanche Hutto, on October 26. She says the **Detroit Puppet Guild** did swell this year, with shows for the PTA's, scouts, churches, etc. She had a whopping class at the University, writing and producing plays for the annual Art Education affair in mid-December, called "Christmas in Motion," at which they had movies, carols, and puppet plays.

Lincoln Scheurle of Dayton, Ohio, did a puppet TV series as part of a non-political campaign to pass a school bond issue and tax levy in the Dayton election on November 6. Lincoln is a TV director of an advertising agency there. When the idea fell in his lap, he called on Cleo and Harry Fowler (Harry is Visual Education Director for Cereal Institute of Chicago.) for help, as well as Peggy Leonard of Dayton. He'd be glad to share his experiences with those of us who have similar problems. Christmas windows in New York included **Lynn Roberts** in Abraham and Straus, **Suzari** in Sach's Quality Stores. Les and Mabel Beaton's films of "Night Before Christmas" and "The Nativity" introduced American Telephone and Telegraph Company to the TV audiences at Christmas time.

Josephine Conley of Portland, Maine, calls our attention to the November, 1951 issue of **Craft Horizons'** article, "Poland Builds Palaces for Christmas," palaces being actually puppet theatres. Louise Pizzania from over Philadelphia way has fun with puppets: after a Halloween show for her co-workers, her boss gave her a raise, and the afternoon off to see the Salzburgers. Two of her ghosts did "Minnie, the Moocher" at Marion Myer's **Quaker Village Puppeteers** party, and others of her cast amused the children's ward of a near-by hospital. Cora and Bill Baird and their puppets premiered a new TV show, "The Whistling Wizard" in New York on November 3. Ruth Trappan, West Orange, New Jersey, shared her knowledge of puppet making with the Montclair Art Teacher's Association on November 14. On November 20, **LaRoy Bros. Marionettes** opened at the Roxy in New York, and **Marlin Brothers** opened at the Paramount. Bill Schuring moved his **Pied Piper Puppeteers** to new studio headquarters at 506 West Broadway, New York. Sid Krofft in the Ice Review at the Hotel New Yorker October through December.

Mary and Ed's Marionettes (Harvey, Illinois) recently produced "Frosty's Christmas" and "Adventures of Uncle Wiggily." And they applaud Mr. and Mrs. M. Winberg's (Chicago) "Parade of Queens," a "delicate revue using 12-inch figures of famous femme fatale." Who has seen Kenn King, night clubber from Hermosa Beach, California, with puppets ranging from 15-inch to five feet? John Conway of Toronto

did a "command performance" at Christmas for His Excellency, Viscount Alexander, Governor-General of Canada. The **York Puppet Theater** has thereby "reached the top, socially." Hear! Hear! During January they did a short tour into "the States." **Parsons' Puppets** (Shelby, Michigan,) have a swell new brochure. Natalie Hackenschmidt and her leading man, Jack Abernathy, spent some time in December at the Stevens' Mousetrap, and went away with a new theater and exciting plans for new shows.

Edward N. Nelson who makes the rod puppets for the **Kungsholm Opera Co.**, Chicago reports a departure for them; their new ballerinas will be operated with strings. By the way, their opening date is Tuesday, January 15, with "Madame Butterfly." Dick Myers is reported to be working for the **Bert Johnston Productions**, Cincinnati, doing camera, recording, and editing. **Lessell Marionettes** did a department store in Stockton, California, from Thanksgiving 'till Christmas, and as though that wasn't enough, commuted to San Francisco every night for appearances under the sponsorship of the Call-Bulletin!

Notice to organizations: I appreciate your sending me news of your activities, but don't be surprised when they don't appear in this column; I forward them to our Editor, who has a special department for them! ("Sorry, Steve, arrived too late for publication." . . . Ed.) Dorothy Rankin, Peabody, Massachusetts combines puppets and moppets, musicals and messes, and comes out with a full life. With all the members of her family in the hospital at one time or another, and she herself under the doctor's care, she still "troupes," plans a show with the Boston Symphony, and dreams up ways to help the P. of A. "We earn a place in the P. of A." she says, "by giving as well as receiving."

What a to-do is going on over Burr Tillstrom's "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie" TV show! Recently this program's time was cut from its regular half-hour to fifteen minutes. The howl that went up from viewers was heard as far as **Time** magazine. **TV Forecast**, a magazine of Chicago origin, declares the cut is part of a plot "by the big brass who have a stranglehold on TV program planning." "The network offices, headquartered in New York and Hollywood, have served notice on the video public that all major programs will henceforth originate from either coast. In effect, it's the death knell for midwest television." NBC, through Vice-President Weaver, says, ". . . any show enterprise, and particularly one of genius as is Kukla, Fran and Ollie . . . must be alert to those changes which will assure continuation as the tops. And one obvious consideration has been to give the public less of the thing they want so much, to sharpen their anticipation for the next night's appearance." Amidst all the shouting, the gentlest voice heard was Burr's, and his public response was a credit to him and to his profession.

A new TV puppet show, "Dick Tracy," started out at Christmastime over Du Mont. Dunno' who's producing it, but it's on film. "In the Park" is another one, over CBS, about a ne'er-do-well and his puppet friends. Who's doing all these?

Olga and I want to thank all of you for your Christmas cards, and to wish you all a Happy New Year. We were gratified by those of you who visited us, — Margo and Rufus Rose, Jean Wiksell, Al Wallace, Ed Johnson, George Latshaw, Don Sahlin, Barbara Amundson, and Archie Elliot — a regular midwinter festival.

Robert Myers, The Woods Schools, Langhorne, Pennsylvania, with

an assist from another teacher there, Mr. Royer, built and staged "Hansel and Gretel," which ran the entire week before Christmas. His object is to help handicapped children. Lettie Connell, San Francisco, did "The Prince Who Was a Swineherd" during Book Week, assisted in performance by Tony Urbano, George Alexander and Virginia Chesse' (Ralph's daughter-in-law). Frank Portillo, Philadelphia, was delighted at the size of the house enjoyed by the Salzburgs. Margaret Hand, Tuscon, is now working with Christine Cobb (formerly with Suzari) and starting a production of "Snow White and Rose Red." They have signed up for some TV leaders too. But shucks — that ain't nothin' — Margaret is engaged to marry a Professor of Political Science, who in addition to his other qualifications is becoming more and more enthusiastic about puppets! What more can a girl want? Dick Snyder and his lovely wife and daughter, currently live at 1831 South Racine Street, Chicago 8, Illinois, where they will stay until they move to the manse of his new church, the Bethlehem Presbyterian.

Remember, this column depends on you for its existence. We want to know what YOU are doing.

Tell it to Steve, Middlebury, Indiana.



Festival Festival Festival

It's your Festival. Send me ideas on what you'd like to see, whom you'd like to see, and what you'd like to have done for the Festival.

Incidentally, what can you do? Report at once to:

Wesley Wiksell, L. S. U. Baton Rouge, La. (Festival Chairman)

For Sale; Puppets by Paul McPharlin. Also stage, puppets, scenery and properties by Marjorie Batchelder. Write for complete list to:

Marjorie B. McPharlin, 4426 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio

There are many booksellers in the U. S. but only one specializing in puppetry. Current books, whether published here or abroad, supplied from stock. Out of print titles, if not on hand, gladly searched for without extra charge. Requests for information and inquiries with respect to specific volumes always welcome. Quotations given cheerfully.

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